

Attendance and Punctuality

The Role of Parents/Carers



Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Taken from 'Academy Attendance' - guidance for academies and local authorities
Department for Education, Nov 2016

Eastbrook Primary Academy aims to promote a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.

The minimum attendance we are targeting is 96%.

Term time leave

Amendments to the 2006 Government regulations (appendix 1) make it clear that the current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child for a family holiday or extended leave of absence during term time. Any application for leave must be in 'exceptional circumstances' and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

If you feel your request could be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' a completed request form must be sent into school for the attention of the headteacher before the holiday is booked.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include: a short absence (usually a day) to attend a close family wedding or funeral, an external exam or an important religious/cultural festival.

Arriving late

The school day begins at 8.50am and we expect your child to be ready to enter by this time; this means children should be in the playground by 8.45am. The school gates open at 8.40am.

Registers are completed by 9.05am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.25am the registers are closed in accordance with Government Guidelines, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence. This could lead to a penalty notice if the problem persists.

Being frequently late adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving just 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

Some strategies to improve punctuality

Bedtime routines

- Encouraging children to pack their bag before going to bed, so that they are ready for the next day.
- Getting to bed earlier.
- Setting a time for a television, iPad, computer, mobile phone and other devices to be turned off.

Morning routines

- Setting the alarm for a time that allows all morning routines to be carried out without being late.
- Having breakfast before leaving home, so there is no need to call in at the shop on the way to school.
- Encouraging children to leave home at least five minutes earlier than they think they need to.
- Meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with.
- Attending a breakfast club if available.

How can parents/carers help their child have good attendance and punctuality?

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Notify the school by telephone on the first day that their child is unavailable to attend (by 9.30am).
- Indicate when their child can be expected to return to school, or phone each additional morning their child is absent
- Avoid making medical/dental appointments during the school day.
- Do not take children out of school during term time (and in the case of exceptional circumstances permission must be granted by the Headteacher).
- Promote the value of excellent attendance at home and follow the procedures set by the school.
- Advise the academy of any difficulties they may be having so that appropriate support can be provided.
- Are aware that Section 444 of the Education Act states, 'If a pupil of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.'

Why is good attendance and punctuality important?

Education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to both academic and social development, which in turn will improve the life chances of children and young people.

What is good attendance?

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
95-96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4

So what does 90% attendance actually mean?

90% attendance over a school year = absent for ½ a day every week!

Responsibility of the parents and carers

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time in order to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their school experience. Failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by West Sussex Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team (formerly Education Welfare Office).

If a child is registered at a school they must by law attend that school regularly and punctually. Children should only miss school if they are ill or unable to attend for some other unavoidable reason.

Eastbrook Primary Academy believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community. We will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance as early as possible and try to resolve any difficulties.

Reporting an absence

Our arrangements for the notification of absence and seeking approval for absence.

Reporting absence (with the exception of term time leave of absence)

- On the first day of their child's absence parents are asked to telephone the school office, on 01273 874050, by 9.30am.
- If it is unclear how long the child will be absent from school parents are asked to contact the school on a daily basis to record the absence.

Illness and Medical/dental appointments

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- Parents are asked to inform the school in advance if their child has a medical appointment.
- Children should attend school around the appointment wherever possible.
- Children will not be allowed to leave the premises unless they are collected by an adult, or it has been agreed in writing.
- An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required.
- If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last symptom. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- In the case of repeated absences, the school will require a written explanation as to why a child has been absent. The office will request this when it is needed. Parents may also be asked to share relevant information from the GP.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school

Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that either calling the school or providing a note for an absence does not automatically mean it will be authorised.

What is an authorised absence?

There may be some circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- Illness
- Hospital/dental/doctor appointments for the pupil which can't be made outside school hours
- Major religious observations
- Visits to prospective new school
- External exams or educational assessments.

Religious observance

Eastbrook Primary Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will consider authorising absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates and should request the absence in the normal way by completing a request form in advance.

What is an unauthorised absence?

These are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which "leave" of absence has not been given. Some examples of this type of absence include:

- Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park
- A birthday treat
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Looking after other children/family members
- Medical appointments for other family members
- Truancy
- Parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- Absences that have never been properly explained.

